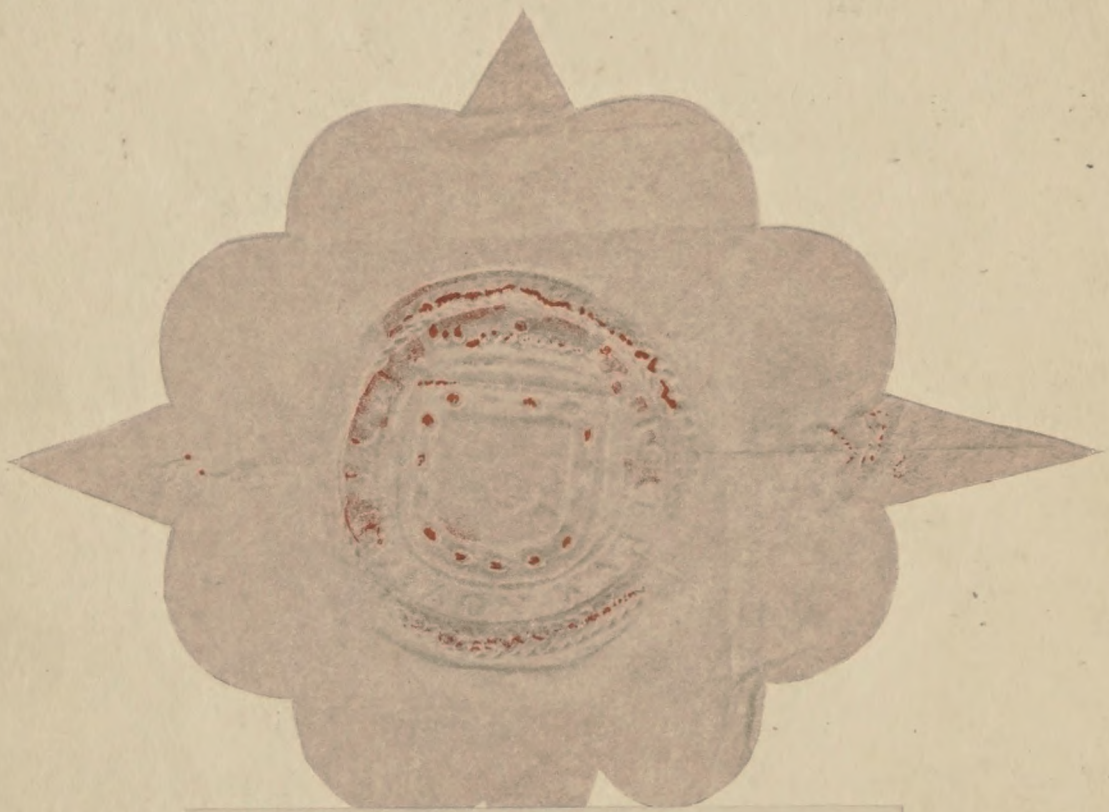
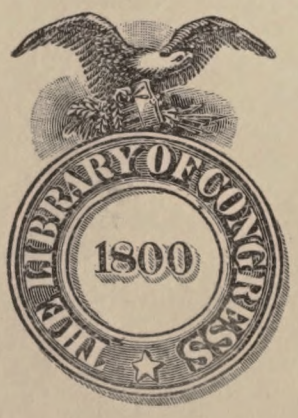
# JACOB STEENDAM

*The First Poet in New Netherland*



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*Jacob Steendam*
*The First Poet in New Netherland*



*Behold the contour, countenance, and outward guise,*
*Of SWEENDAM: here portrayed by Kooman's skilful hand.*
*His mental gifts, perused in his sweet melodies,*
*Provide God's Church, a harp, which does the ear enchant,*
*With David's heavenly song. His art who'll fully prize?*
*The hymning of the Lord, above all praise does rise.*

*Engraving on stone at the Hague, by* **F. Spanier**, *lithographer of H.M. the King of the Neth.ds*

# JACOB STEENDAM

NOCH VASTER

# A MEMOIR

OF THE

# FIRST POET IN NEW NETHERLAND

WITH

TRANSLATIONS OF
HIS POEMS DESCRIPTIVE

OF THE

# COLONY




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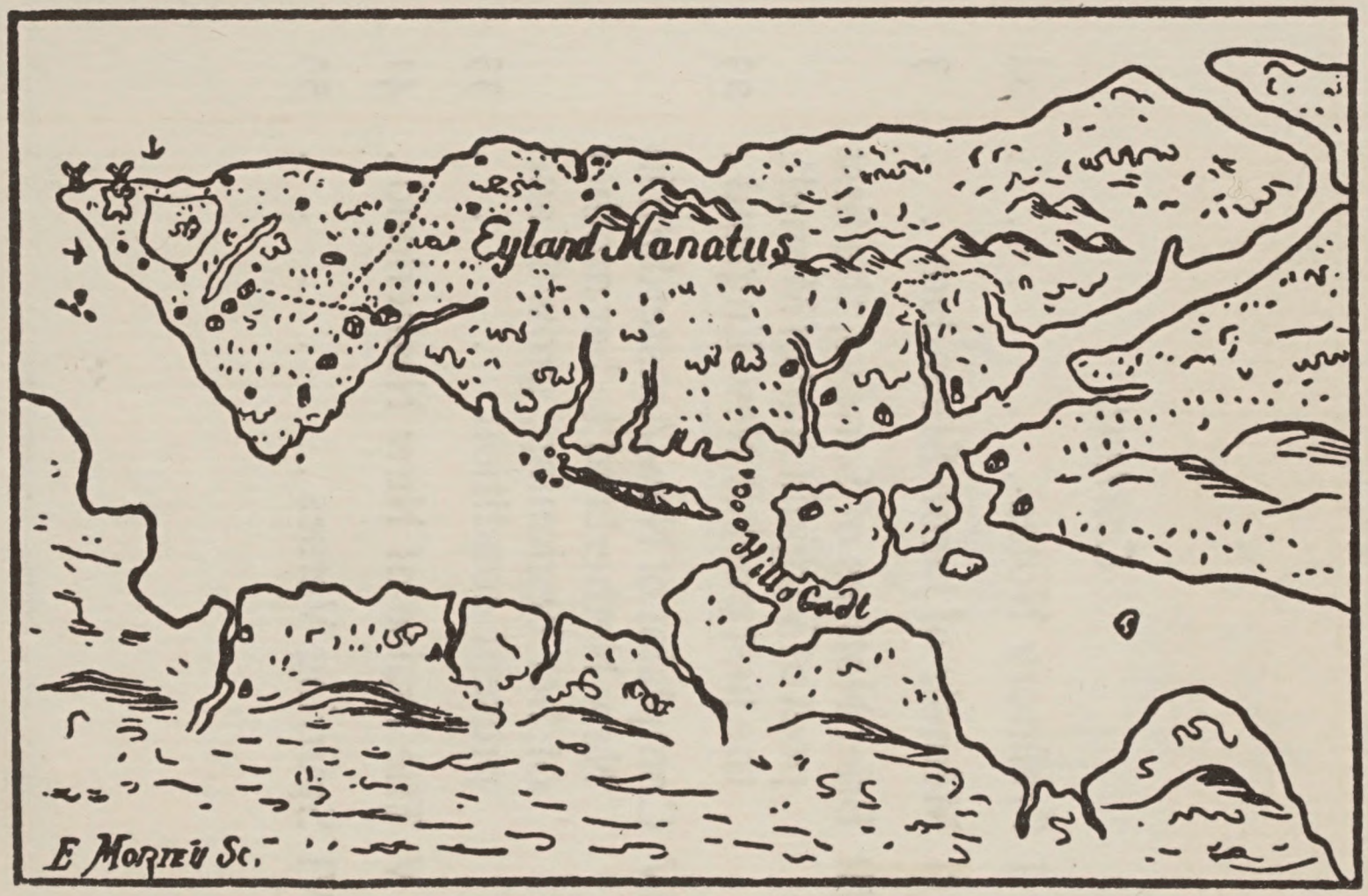
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THE EARLIEST KNOWN MAP OF THE ISLAND OF MANHATTAN
AND PART OF LONG ISLAND

## *Prefatory Notes*

MR. HENRY C. MURPHY, statesman, scholar, bibliophile, and one deeply interested in the early history of our city, must have found his residence in Holland and the advantages which his official position as our minister at The Hague afforded him, a source of much gratification, profit and pleasure. The long list of his writings and publications proves how diligently he availed himself of his exceptional opportunities, while his library, disposed of at auction after his death, shows how keen and intelligent a book-hunter he was.

Among his contributions to the literature of the New Netherlands, besides the "Anthology" to which reference is made in the following pages, are his translations of De Vries' "Voyage from Holland to

America, 1632–1644," "Broad Advice to the New Netherlands," "First Minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in the United States," "Henry Hudson in Holland" and "Dankers and Sluyters Journal of a Voyage to New York and a Tour in Several of the American Colonies in 1679 and 80" (an octavo volume of 440 pages), translated and edited in 1867 by Mr. Murphy for the Long Island Historical Society, of which he was at the time the Foreign Corresponding Secretary. His knowledge of the Dutch language which these literary labors display was, we are told, entirely self-acquired.

Mr. Murphy's library, which was sold by George A. Leavitt & Co., auctioneers, March 3, 1884, and the following days, included 3,142 lots. The "pièce de resistance" of the sale was the set of Jesuit Relations* in forty-six volumes described by the compiler of the Catalogue

*"Jesuit Relations of Discoveries and Other Occurrences in Canada and the Northern and Western States of the Union." 1632–1672.

as probably the most complete set of these valuable books ever offered for sale in Europe or America. It sold for $3,600, although several of the volumes were not first editions.

The department of Mr. Murphy's library relating to the New Netherlands contained many rare books and pamphlets, but the assertion made in the introduction to the Catalogue that "no book related to the subject, is known that is not to be found in the collection," is an over statement, for we look in vain for a number of books of this character.

Mr. Murphy was a member of the Twenty-eighth Congress of the United States and a State Senator for twelve consecutive years. He was appointed Minister to Holland by President Buchanan, and held the post until the coming into office of President Lincoln, by whom he was recalled.

---

The seals of Novi Belgii; and of New York City in 1686, which appear upon

the lining papers of the covers of this book, are copies of impressions from the original seals in the possession of the writer. The first named came from Mr. Murphy's collection, the last is appended to a document signed by John Johnson, Mayor of New York in 1717.

W. L. A.

Xmas, 1907.

*Jacob Steendam*
*The First Poet in New Netherland*

Den

# DISTELVINK.

# Eerſte Deel, Minne-ſang:

*BEHELSENDE*

## Eerlijke Minne-Sinne-Beelden, Vaarſen, en Liedekens: op verſcheyden Oude en Nuwe Sang-konſtige Stemmen.

*Door*

J. J. STEENDAM.

t'AMSTERDAM,

Voor GERRIT van GOEDESBERGH, Boek-verkooper, op het Water over de Nieuwe-brugh, in de Delffſche Bybel. 1649.

# *The First Poet in New Netherland*

"There is STEENDAM, in his simple garb; a study of the costume of our early colonists, and in his frank and fearless countenance—the type of the early settlers of New York."

—H. C. W.

THE following is the opening stanza of one of Jacob Steendam's amatory poems in the first collected edition of his works published at Amsterdam in 1649, under the title of Den Distelvink—freely translated for the writer by an honest Dutch dealer in antiquities in this city who is also an

accomplished linguist and a man well versed in the literature of his native land.

| MINNAARS-TOEGEVING | LOVER'S COMPLAINT |
|---|---|
| Segt mijn bekje, | Tell me, dearest, |
| Hartens Diefje, | Thief of my heart, |
| Waarom gekje | Why trifle so |
| Met-je-liefje? | With thy sweetheart? |
| Die u als | Who gives thee all his love |
| Sijn hart bemind: | And false will never prove. |
| Nimmer vals | |
| Gy hem bevind. | |

Seven verses follow, all in the same gushing and love-lorn strain, and may be taken as a fair example of the character of Steendam's Minne-sang or love verses. His name has been accorded a place in the dictionaries of Dutch poets, but it would have possessed little or no interest for us, had not his adventurous spirit led him to seek a home in this newly discovered land of ours.

The hamlet-like appearance that the straggling little town of New Amsterdam, with its verdant background of woods and hills presented, when the Dutch trading vessel which had borne

Jacob Steendam across the "Mar del Nort" (as it was known to those old navigators), came to her moorings in the East River, is displayed in the view on the map in the second edition of Van der Donck's *Beschryvinge van Nieuvv-Nederlant.* A readier reference, however, would be to Arnoldus Montanus's *Beschryvinge van Amerika*, published at Amsterdam in the year 1671, in which, at page 124, a similar prospect of Novum Amsterodamum will be found. The *Montanus* is a book that one must indeed watch for and patiently await an opportunity to secure, but it is not to be compared for rarity with Adriaen van-der Donck's *Beschryvinge*, the little pot quarto volume published by Evert Nieuwenhof 't Aemsteldam, Anno 1656.

The Montanus view, with a border added, also appears in "La Galerie Agreable du Monde" (*66 parts folio*), published by Pierre Van der Aa, a Leide. *No date.* The Dutch map and print publishers of the seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries, had a habit of leaving their books undated. It made it less awkward for them to continue the use of the same plates, indefinitely, year after year, in the numerous ponderous geographical works with which the land of the sea-faring Hollander was flooded. We do not wish to impugn the motives of the industrious and enterprising bookmakers of our fatherland. We simply draw attention to the circumstance.

The town of New Amsterdam, when in 1650, or thereabouts, the first of its poets landed from a small boat at the foot of the only wharf* it then possessed, had not yet seen the semi-centennial anniversary of its plantation. It was a "mean conditioned place," and few and feeble was the folk, over which, from 1647 to 1664, "Peter the Head-

*The North Side of the present Pearl Street between Broad and Whitehall streets, in 1650, fronted the river shore. Extending out from it into the river on the line of the present Moore street was a little wharf built at a very early period. Valentine's "History of the City of New York."

strong" held imperious sway. The entire population of that early time could be comfortably domiciled in one of our modern apartment houses, for, in 1656, it numbered (including the garrison), only a thousand men, women and children, a large proportion of whom were negro slaves. The slave trade flourished in those days under the protection of the West India Company, at Amsterdam, who in 1653 granted liberty to particular merchants, to send two or three ships to the coast of Africa to purchase slaves, and to promote the settlement of the country by importing the same.*

Steendam, notwithstanding that he was a composer of soft and sentimental verses and spiritual songs, appears to have been as intent upon securing a share in the profits of this cruel, exceedingly profitable, though somewhat hazardous traffic, as any of his fellow townsmen. It is recorded to his discredit, that, in 1660, he with others presented a petition to the

*Goodrich's "The Picture of New York," etc.

Director and Council of New Amsterdam for permission to trade to the west coast of Africa, for the purpose of importing slaves and other *articles* into the Colonies. Some sombre shadows lie across the face of things in those good old days, —as we are fond of calling them—that "dulcet" period in our city's history of which Washington Irving was the partly serious, mostly jesting, and altogether delightful chronicler.

It is difficult to realise that only two centuries and a half ago, a lapse of time which three human lives of the not remarkable duration of four-score years, would almost cover, this city of three and a half millions of people—the second largest on the face of the globe—contained less than one hundred and fifty houses, a number of them comfortable dwellings enough, no doubt, surrounded by flower and kitchen gardens, but many of them mere shanties. The church and the Governor's house in the fort, on the then "bluff," where the United States

Custom House now stands, and the City Tavern, later the Stadt-Huys on the corner of the present Pearl Street and Coenties Slip, were the most important and pretentious structures of which the town could boast. There were only seventeen streets laid out, and none of these were paved. Wooden chimneys were not tabooed, nor were the haystacks, hen houses and pig pens yet prohibited by city ordinance, from encumbering and defacing the principal streets.

In 1656, the Burgomasters Oloff Stevenson Van Cortlandt and Allard Anthony, and the Schepens Johannes Van Bruggh, Jacob Strycker, Jan Vinse, Wilhelm Beeckman, and Hendrick Kip bestirred themselves, brushed the tobacco smoke out of their eyes, and, within the next few years, all the streets were paved with the round and flinty cobblestone—a remnant of which indestructible roadway material is probably still in service, in a few of our crooked downtown lanes and alleys, and

will endure, if undisturbed, as long as the Roman Via Appia itself. No sidewalks were provided in these first paved streets, and the gutters ran in the middle thereof, a system of sewerage which our Dutch progenitors adopted, perhaps in fond remembrance of the odoriferous canals of the Fatherland.

What a contrast life in this frontier town, on the banks of Hudson's river, afforded to the old civilisation that Steendam had forsaken in the rich and beautiful city by the Zuyder Zee, where Rembrandt was then painting his masterpieces and plying his magical etching needle; Vondel, the greatest, and "Father" Cats, the most popular, of Dutch poets writing their songs and dramas, and the famous Elzevirian Press issuing its correct and beautiful duodecimo editions of the classics of all Europe. Nevertheless, Steendam expresses no regrets, and is entranced with this new region, which he finds a land flowing with milk and honey and full of

abundant promise. In his *Lof van Nuw-Nederland* (Praise of New Netherland) he thus (following the translation in Mr. Murphy's publication*) apostrophises the country he apparently intended to make his future abiding-place :

"New Netherland, thou noblest spot on earth,
Where Bounteous Heaven ever poureth forth
The fullness of his gifts of greatest worth,
Mankind to nourish."

In seventy-two stanzas, (verbosity characterises most of Steendam's verse) he praises the purity of the atmosphere of New Netherland, descants upon the temperateness of its climate, extols the prolificness of its virgin soil, and boasts of the fecundity in birds, beasts, and fishes of its woods and waters. He proclaims it a land of abundance : the air, water, and soil of greatest purity, and finally bursts forth in this rapturous song and pious invocation :

*For this translation no other merit is claimed by Mr. Murphy than that it conveys the meaning of the poet in the same metrical form as he himself adopted.

"Oh happy land! While envy you invite,
You soar far over, all you thus excite:
And conquer whom by chance you meet in fight,
May God protect and
Defend and save you: peace and comfort give:
All strife and discord from your borders drive:
So Netherlands your happiness perceive
With joy and pleasure."

But the fates were contrary, and unpropitious. Steendam, after a residence here of ten or twelve years, departed for Holland. Perhaps he had heard and heeded the mutterings of the approaching storm, which for a long time had been gathering to the eastward, and broke in full fury over New Amsterdam in 1664, when the English, under Col. Richard Nicolls, captured the town notwithstanding the stubborn resistance of Governor Stuyvesant, and despite the strong palisades and other defences, erected to prevent surprises by the Indians, as well as for a protection against the "ferocious Yankees"—towards the construction of which our poet had, as one of the wealthier citizens of New Amsterdam, contributed his quota of Dutch guilders

in 1653. Again in 1655 he was assessed for the cost of putting the city in a state of defence.

In the year 1860 a volume of old placards and proclamations of the States General of Holland and other broadsides, were sold at The Hague at public sale. Bound up with this valueless material the Honourable Henry C. Murphy, then our Minister at The Hague, found and purchased a folio broadside signed Jacob Steendam, Noch vaster,* printed by Pieter Dirksz T' Amsterdam, 1659. This rare broadside—A Complaint (Klacht) of New Amsterdam, in New Netherland, to her Mother, of her beginning, growth, and present condition—was sold in the sale of Mr. Murphy's books in 1884 and is now in the John Carter-Brown Library in Providence, Rhode Island.

The second of Steendam's poems on New Netherland, "'t Lof van Nuw-Nederland," (The Praise of New Nether-

*A play upon his name. Steendam meaning stone dam, and *Noch vaster* still firmer. H. C. M.

land) was published at Amsterdam in 1661 by the bookseller Jacobus van der Fuyk. A copy of this little Americana nugget is in the Lenox Library, and it is probably as rare a book as any of the priceless literary treasures, sheltered beneath the granite eaves of the building at Seventieth Street and Fifth Avenue. With all his wide acquaintance with Dutch books and pamphlets, Mr. Murphy knew of no other copy.

A third poem by Steendam, on New Netherland's affairs, was discovered by Mr. Murphy in the Royal Library at The Hague, at the end of a pamphlet by Peter Cornelison Plockhoy, published in 1662, in which is set forth a plan for the establishment of a colony of Mennonites* on the South (Delaware) River, in New

*A small denomination of Christians, so called from their founder, Menno Simons of Friesland. They believe that the New Testament is the only rule of faith, that there is no original sin, that infants should not be baptized, and that Christians ought not to take oath, hold office or render military service.—Webster's Dictionary.

Netherland, of which enterprise Plockhoy was the leader. It was entitled "Prickel Vaersen" (spurring verses), "to press or spur on the friends of this new enterprise," and recolonize a country* that the Dutch a few years previously had wrested from the Swedes, pillaged the inhabitants of "everything they could lay their hands upon," and laid waste their houses and plantations.

These three poems, with translations into English, an Introduction, and a Memoir of the poet by Mr. Murphy, were published at The Hague in 1861, in a pamphlet for private distribution. This matter was reprinted in 1865 in the "Anthology of New Netherland, A Translation from the early Dutch poets of New York, with Memoirs of their Lives by Henry C. Murphy." It forms No. 4 of the publications of the Bradford Club.

*The tract of land lying upon the western shore of the Delaware River extending from Cape Henlopen to the Falls of Sanhican (Trenton), which was acquired by treaty with the Indians, and settled by the Swedes about the year 1638.

This galaxy of poets numbers but three: the names of Dominie Henricus Selyns* and Nicasius de Sille† being the only ones added to that of Steendam.

The following facts are taken from this Memoir of Steendam by Mr. Murphy. In it he acknowledges his indebtedness to Mr. Frederick Muller, of Amsterdam, who supplied him with the poet's portrait (a copy of which forms our frontispiece); to the historian Dr. E. B. O'Callaghan, of Albany, N. Y., and to J. T. Bodel-Nyenhuis, Esq., of Leyden, Holland ("the profound investigator of Geographical Science"), to whom Mr. G. M. Asher, Privat-Docent of Roman law in the University of Heidelberg, our chief authority on Dutch books and pamphlets, dedicated his "List of the Maps and Charts of New Netherland and of the Views of New Amsterdam." A group of students of our early Dutch

* Pastor of the first church in Brooklyn.

† Statesman and lawyer, first councilor in the provincial government of the West India Company.

history was here assembled, the like of which we will not soon, if ever again, see in collaboration.

Jacob Steendam was probably born in the city of Enkhuizen, in North Holland, in 1616. Early in life he removed to Amsterdam. He was for fifteen years in the service of the West India Company, and in 1641 was sent by its directors to the Coast of Guinea. Upon his return, in 1649, he collected his poems and published them under the title of "Den Distelvink" (The Thistle or Goldfinch), a branch of the bird family to which the linnets and canary birds belong. Henrick Bruno, whose four laudatory verses are prefixed to the third part of the "Distelvink," considers this little feathered warbler too modest a representative of the lofty flights of Steendam's muse, and suggests as more emblematical the wonderful vocal powers of the strong-winged, high-soaring nightingale.

The first and second parts of "Den Dis-

telvink" appeared in 1649; the third in 1650. Together they form a quarto volume of about 550 pages. The first two parts bear the imprint of Gerrit van Goedesbergh, the third that of Hendrick Doncker, Boek-verkoopers (bibliopoles), both in the good old city of Amsterdam.

The first part of the "Distelvink" contains love songs (Minne-Sang). The second (Zegen-Sang) epithalamiums and triumphal songs—and the third (Hemel-Sang) heavenly or spiritual hymns. All are set to the music of some more ancient hymn or song. Most of the love songs are written in the short, peculiar metre of the verse at the head of this article, a favorite poetical measure with the seventeenth century Dutch poets and people.

Shortly after the publication of "Den Distelvink," Steendam embarked for New Netherland, apparently with the intention of making a permanent settlement in the colony, for after his arrival he purchased "plantations" on Long

Island* and became the owner of houses and lots on the island of Manhattan; one on the "Breedweg" (Broadway) and another on "Paerl Straat" (Pearl Street) between State and Whitehall Streets. But it was not destined so to be, for he never more set foot in this new land of which he had sung the praises and voiced the complaint, after his return to Holland about the year 1662. New Amsterdam, shortly after his departure was blotted from the map, and the great Dutch cartographer, Carolus Allard, could no longer thereafter include the cherished name among his one hundred notable towns and cities of the world.† We can readily imagine that a return to the conquered town, and the oath of allegiance to James, Duke of York, that he might be required to take, involved

*These farms were located at "Mespat Kill" (Newtown Creek) and at "Amersfort," later known as *Flatlands*.

†"Orbis habitabilis oppida et vestitus centenario numero complexa summo studio Collecta Atique in lucem edita à Carolo Allard."

more mortification of spirit than Steendam's stubborn Dutch pride could brook.

In 1665, this restless roving minstrel, whose spirit, Mr. Murphy concludes, was too active to leave either mind or body long at rest, left Holland for the Dutch East India possessions and the few traces of him that are found thereafter, show him to have been for some time a resident of the walled town of Batavia, in the island of Java, a colony founded by the Dutch about the same time as New Amsterdam, where, in 1671, he was *vader* or superintendent of the Orphan House and wrote and published what was probably his last poetical effusion: "Zeedes-angen voor de Batavische jonkheyt,"* "Moral songs for the Batavian youth," containing divers memorable and edifying matters adapted to

*A copy of this book sold in Mr. Murphy's sale for $19. It appears to have been considered more valuable than the folio broadside, the "Complaint of New Amsterdam," which brought only $12. Mr. Murphy's library contained both the first and second editions of

known melodies. Here, in a land of earthquakes and tornadoes, Jacob Steendam disappears from mortal eye, and the time, place and manner of his death are wrapped in the same mystery that shrouds the fate of the discoverer of the island of Manhattan, in which Steendam, whilom, made his home, and the future greatness and glory of which he in a measure foresaw and proved thereby his possession of at least one of the attributes of a poet—the gift of prophecy.

Centuries have come and gone since Steendam wrote his hymns and lyrics, and the dust lies thick upon the parchment covers of his all but forgotten "Distelvink." The anthology of our city now embraces the name of many a poet who invoked the muse with more success than he, and some, we venture

Van der Donck's "Beschryvinge," 1655 and 1656, which sold for $55 and $50 respectively. A fine copy of either edition would now be worth $400 or $500. The two poetical works of Steendam are now simply among the things we read about but never see.

to assert with less, but whatever may be the merit, or the faults and imperfections of Steendam's verse, his name must of necessity, like that of Abou Ben Adhem, lead all the rest. As Mr. Murphy writes, measured by the standard and accorded the privileges which have adjudged Sandys the first poet of Virginia, and Morrell the first poet of New England, Steendam is hereafter to rank as the first poet of New York.

WILLIAM LORING ANDREWS.

# BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

*" And, worthy George, by industry and use,*
*Let's see what lines Virginia will produce,*
*Go on with Ovid, as you have begun*
*With the first five books; let y'r numbers run*
*Glib as the former; so shall it live long,*
*And do much honor to the English tongue."*

*—Drayton.*

# BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES
## OF
## THE FIRST POET OF VIRGINIA
## AND
## THE FIRST POET OF NEW ENGLAND

GEORGE SANDYS, the seventh and youngest son of Edwin Sandys, archbishop of York, was born at Bishopthorpe, England, on March 2, 1577–78.

In April, 1621, he was appointed by the Virginian Company treasurer of the company, and sailed to America with *Sir Francis Wyat*, the newly appointed governor, who had married Sandys's niece, Margaret, daughter of his brother Samuel. When the crown assumed the government of the colony, Sandys was nominated a member of the council (August 26, 1624), and was twice re-appointed (March 4, 1626, and March 22, 1628). He seems to have acquired a plantation and busied himself in developing it, but was repeatedly quarrelling with his neighbors and the Colonial council. In 1627

he complained to the privy council in London that he had been unjustly treated. On March 4, 1627–8, Governor *Francis West* and the Colonial council informed the privy council that Sandys had defied the rights of other settlers. A special commission 'for the better plantation of Virginia' was appointed by the English government on June 22, 1631, and Sandys petitioned for the post of secretary on the ground that he had 'spent his ripest years in the public employment' in the colony. His application failed, and he apparently abandoned Virginia soon afterwards.

While in America Sandys completed a verse translation of Ovid's "Metamorphoses," which he had begun in England. On April 27, 1621—when he was on the point of setting out—Matthew Lownes and William Barrett obtained a license for the publication of "Ovides Metamorphosis translated into English verse by Master George Sandes." In the same year "the first five books" of the translation were duly published by Barrett, and the volume reached a second edition. The title-page was engraved by Delaram, and Ovid's head in an oval was prefixed. Haslewood described a copy of the second edition,

but no copy of that or the first is now known. The remaining ten books were rendered by Sandys into English verse during the early years of his stay in Virginia. Two, he says, were completed "amongst the roaring of the seas." Michael Drayton, whose acquaintance he had made in London, addressed to him, soon after his arrival in Virginia, an attractive epistle in verse, urging him to "go on with Ovid as you have begun with the first five books." The completed translation appeared in London—printed by William Stansby—in 1626; it was dedicated to Charles I. William Marshall engraved the title-page; on the back of the dedication is a medallion portrait of Ovid. A biography of the poet with some of the laudations bestowed on him by early critics forms the preface. A full index concludes the volume.

"National Dictionary of Biography," vol. 50, p. 290.

WILLIAM MORRELL, an English clergyman of the Established Church, came to America in 1623, with the company sent out by the Plymouth council under the command of Captain Robert, son of Sir Ferdinando

Gorges. Morrell bore a commission from the Ecclesiastical Court in England to exercise a superintendence over the churches which were or might be established in the colony. The attempt by this company to form a settlement at Wessagussett, now Weymouth in Massachusetts, was unsuccessful. After Gorges return, Morrell remained a year at Plymouth and then returned to England, where he soon afterwards published in Latin hexameters and English heroics, the latter a little rough, his poem "Nova Anglia," which he addressed to King Charles I. It is mainly taken up with the animal inhabitants of the land and their conquerors, the native Indians. The opening address to New England is really grand. We have marked one line by italics, for its stirring tone in the English portion, which is something more than a mere literal version of his Latin.

NEW ENGLAND

Fear not, poor Muse, 'cause first to sing her fame
That's yet scarce known, unless by map or name;
*A grandchild to earth's paradise is born,*
Well limb'd, well nerv'd, fair, rich, sweet, yet forlorn.
Thou blest director, so direct my verse
That it may win her people, friends, commerce.

Whilst her sweet air, rich soil, blest seas, my pen
Shall blaze and tell the natures of her men.
New England, happy in her new, true style,
Weary of her cause she's to sad exile
Exposed by her's unworthy of her land;
Entreats with tears Great Britain to command
Her empire, and to make her know the time,
Whose act and knowledge only makes divine.
A royal work well worthy England's king,
These natives to true truth and grace to bring;
A noble work for all these noble peers,
Which guide this state in their superior spheres.
You holy Aarons, let your censers ne'er
Cease burning till these men Jehovah fear.

This curious poem is conducted with considerable spirit. There is this allusion to the Indian song:

And though these men no letters know, yet there
Pan's harsher numbers we may somewhere hear;
And vocal odes which us affect with grief,
Though to their minds perchance they give relief.*

*Duyckinck's Cyclopædia of American Literature*, vol. 1, p. 2.

*The whole poem is reprinted in the Mass. Hist. Society Collections, First Series, I, 125–39.



# POEMS
ON
# NEW NETHERLAND

COMPLAINT OF NEW AMSTERDAM

# IN NEW NETHERLAND

TO

# HER MOTHER

OF HER BEGINNING, GROWTH AND PRESENT CONDITION

AMSTERDAM

By PETER DIRCKSON BOETEMAN

Bookprinter, on the Egelantine Canal, 1659.

# THE COMPLAINT

OF

# NEW AMSTERDAM

---

*I'M a grandchild of the Gods*
*Who on th' Amstel have abodes;*
*Whence their orders forth are sent,*
*Swift for aid and punishment.*
*I, of Amsterdam was born,*
*Early of her breasts forlorn;*
*From her care so quickly weaned*
*Oft have I my fate bemoaned.*
*From my youth up left alone,*
*Naught save hardship have I known;*
*Dangers have beset my way*
*From the first I saw the day.*
*Think you this a cause for marvel?*
*This will then the thread unravel,*
*And the circumstances trace,*
*Which upon my birth took place.*
*Would you ask for my descent?*
*Long the time was it I spent*
*In the loins of warlike Mars.*

*'T seems my mother, seized with fears,*
*Prematurely brought me forth,*
*But I now am very loth*
*To inform how this befel;*
*Though 't was thus, I know full well,*
*Bacchus, too, — it is no dream, —*
*First beheld the daylight's beam*
*From the thigh of Jupiter.*
*But my reasons go too far.*
*My own matter must I say,*
*And not loiter by the way,*
*E'en though Bacchus oft has proven*
*Friend to me in my misfortune.*
*Now the midwife who received me,*
*Was Bellona; in suspense, she*
*Long did sit in trembling fear,*
*For the travail was severe.*
*From the moment I was born,*
*Indian neighbors made me mourn.*
*They pursued me night and day,*
*While my mother kept away.*
*But my sponsors did supply*
*Better my necessity;*
*They sustained my feeble life;*
*They procured a bounteous wife*
*As my nurse, who did not spare*
*To my lips her paps to bare.*

*This was Ceres; freely she*
*Rendered what has nurtured me.*
*Her most dearly I will prize;*
*She has made my horns to rise;*
*Trained my growth through tender years,*
*'Midst my burdens and my cares.*
*True both simple 't was, and scant,*
*What I had to feed my want.*
*Oft 't was naught except Sapawn* [1]
*And the flesh of buck or fawn.*
*When I thus began to grow,*
*No more care did they bestow.*
*Yet my breasts are full and neat,*
*And my hips are firmly set.*
*Neptune shows me his good will;*
*Merc'ry, quick, exerts his skill*
*Me t'adorn with silk and gold;*
*Whence I'm sought by suitors bold.*
*Stricken by my cheeks' fresh bloom,*
*By my beauteous youthful form,*
*They attempt to seize the treasure*
*To enjoy their wanton pleasure.*
*They, my orchards too, would plunder,*
*Truly 'tis a special wonder,*
*That a maid, with such a portion,*

[1] A pure Indian word, adopted by the colonists and still in use, meaning mush or boiled meal of maize.

*Does not suffer more misfortune:*
*For, I venture to proclaim,*
*No one can a maiden name,*
*Who with richer land is blessed*
*Than th' estate by me possessed.*
*See: two streams my garden bind,*
*From the East and North they wind, —*
*Rivers pouring in the sea,*
*Rich in fish, beyond degree.*
*Milk and butter; fruits to eat*
*No one can enumerate;*
*Ev'ry vegetable known;*
*Grain the best that e'er was grown.*
*All the blessings man e'er knew,*
*Here does Our Great Giver strew,*
*(And a climate ne'er more pure)*
*But for me, — yet immature,*
*Fraught with danger, for the Swine*
*Trample down these crops of mine;*
*Up-root, too, my choicest land;*
*Still and dumb, the while, I stand,*
*In the hope, my mother's arm*
*Will protect me from the harm.*
*She can succour my distress.*
*Now my wish, my sole request, —*
*Is for men to till my land;*
*So I'll not in silence stand.*

*I have lab'rors almost none;*
*Let my household large become;*
*I'll my mother's kitchen furnish*
*With my knicknacks, with my surplus,*
*With tobacco, furs and grain;*
*So that Prussia she'll disdain.*

JACOB STEENDAM,
*Noch vaster.*

# THE PRAISE

OF

# NEW NETHERLAND

WHEREIN ARE BRIEFLY AND TRULY SHOWN THE EXCELLENT QUALITIES WHICH IT POSSESSES IN THE PURITY OF THE AIR, FERTILITY OF THE SOIL, PRODUCTION OF THE CATTLE, ABUNDANCE OF GAME AND FISH: WITH ITS ADVANTAGES FOR NAVIGATION AND COMMERCE

BY

JACOB STEENDAM

AMSTERDAM

For JACOBUS VAN DER FUYK

Bookseller in the Still-Alley, Anno 1661

# THE PRAISE OF NEW NETHERLAND

DEDICATED TO

THE HONORABLE

## CORNELIS VAN RUYVEN

COUNCILLOR AND SECRETARY OF THE HON. WEST INDIA COMPANY THERE

*Faithful and very Upright Promoter of New Netherland*

---

WITH *sharpened pen and wit, one tunes his lays,*
*To sing the vanity of fame and praise;*
*His moping thoughts, bewildered in a maze,*
*In darkness wander.*
*What brings disgrace, what constitutes a wrong,*
*These form the burden of the tuneful song:*
*And honor saved, his senses then among*
*The dark holes ponder.*
*For me, it is a nobler theme I sing.*
*New Netherland springs forth my heroine;*

*Where Amstel's folk did erst their people bring,*
*And still they flourish.*
*New Netherland, thou noblest spot of earth,*
*Where Bounteous Heaven ever poureth forth*
*The fulness of His gifts, of greatest worth,*
*Mankind to nourish.*
*Whoe'er to you a judgment fair applies,*
*And knowing, comprehends your qualities,*
*Will justify the man who, to the skies,*
*Extols your glories.*
*Who studies well your natural elements,*
*And with the plumb of science, gains a sense*
*Of all the four: fails not in their defence,*
*Before free juries.*
*Your* Air, *so clear, so sharp to penetrate*
*The Western breezes softly moderate;*
*And, tempering the heat, they separate*
*It from all moisture.*
*From damp, and mist, and fog, they set it free;*
*From smells of pools, they give it liberty:*
*The struggling stenches made to mount on high,*
*And be at peace there.*
*No deadly pest its purity assails,*
*To spread infection o'er your hills and vales,*
*Save when a guilty race, great sins bewails*
*In expiating.*
*Your Sun, th' original of* Fire *and heat,*

*The common nutriment of both to eat,*
*Is warm and pure; in plants most delicate,*
*Much sap creating.*
*Nor turf, nor dried manure*[1]*,— within your*
*doors,*
*Nor coal, extracted from earth's secret stores;*
*Nor sods, uplifted from the barren moors,*
*For fuel given;*
*Which, with foul stench the brain intoxicate;*
*And thus, by the foul gas which they create,*
*The intellects of many, wise and great,*
*Men are out-driven.*
*The forests do, with better means, supply*
*The hearth and house: the stately hickory,*
*Not planted, does the winter fell defy,—*
*A valiant warden;*
*So closely grained, so rich with fragrant oil,*
*Before its blaze both wet and cold recoil;*
*And sweetest perfumes float around the while,*
*Like 'n Eden's garden.*
*The* Water *clear and fresh, and pure and sweet,*
*Springs up continually beneath the feet,*
*And everywhere the gushing fountains meet,*
*In brooks o'erflowing,*
*Which animals refresh, both tame and wild;*

[1] This article is used in some parts of the Netherlands for fuel.

*And plants conduce to grow on hill and field;*
*And these to man unnumbered comforts yield,*
*And quickly growing.*
*The* Earth *in soils of different shades appears,*
*Black, blue and white, and red; its bosom bears*
*Abundant harvests; and, what pleases, spares*
*Not to surrender.*
*No bounds exist to their variety.*
*They nourishment afford most plenteously*
*To creatures which, in turn, man's wants supply*
*And health engender.*
*O fruitful land! heaped up with blessings kind,*
*Whoe'er your several virtues brings to mind, —*
*Its proper value to each gift assigned,*
*Will soon discover,*
*If ever land perfection have attained,*
*That you in all things have that glory gained;*
*Ungrateful mortal, who, your worth disdained,*
*Would pass you over.*
*In North America behold your* Seat,
*Where all that heart can wish you satiate,*
*And where oppressed with wealth inordinate,*
*You have the power,*
*To bless the people with whate'er they need;*
*The melancholy, from their sorrows, lead;*
*The light of heart, exulting pleasure cede,*
*Who never cower.*

*The* Ocean *laves secure the outer shore,*
*Which like a dyke, is raised your fields before;*
*And streams, like arteries, all veined o'er,*
*The woods refreshing;*
*And rolling down from mountains and the hills,*
*Afford upon their banks, fit sites for mills;*
*And furnish, what the heart with transport fills,*
*The finest fishing.*
*The lamprey, eel and sunfish, and the white*
*And yellow perch, which grace your covers dight;*
*And shad and striped bass, not scarce, but quite*
*Innumerable.*
*The bream and sturgeon, drumfish and gurnard;*
*The sea-bass which a prince would not discard;*
*The cod and salmon, — cooked with due regard,*
*Most palatable.*
*The black- and rock-fish, herring, mackerel,*
*The haddock, mosbankers and roach which fill*
*The nets to loathing; are so many, all*
*Cannot be eaten.*
*And thus it happens here, that in the flood*
*Which, rolling from the Fountain of all Good,*
*O'erwhelms weak mortal man with royal food,*
*HE is forgotten.*
*You've weak-fish, carp and turbot; pike and*
*plaice;*
*There's not a pool or tiny water trace,*

*Where swarm not myriads of the finny race,*
*Easily taken.*
*Crabs, lobsters, mussels; oysters, too, there be*
*So large, that one does overshadow three*
*Of those of Europe; and, in quantity*
*No one can reckon.*
*The tortoise, seal and shark; and in your bay,*
*The mighty whale and porpoise sporting, they*
*The power and wondrous works of God display*
*For our beholding.*
*And curious forms come out the shoalless deep,*
*Whose depths produced by Wisdom Infinite,*
*Have never slept and never more will sleep,*
*HIS works unfolding.*
*The* Animals *which in the woods roam free*
*By thousands; and are no one's property,*
*Are reared like lambs, their flesh and skins to be*
*For man's sustaining.*
*The beaver, and the otter, clean of limb;*
*The weasel, which has scarce the like of him;*
*The wild cat, strengthening the old, who seem,*
*With gout complaining.*
*Raccoon and fox, with marten, mink and hare;*
*The nimble squirrels, leaping through the air*
*And flying; which, to craven stomachs, are*
*Baits most decoying.*
*Bears, lions, wolves and other beasts of prey,*

*The chase has long since made to waste away,*
*Their maws, with naught the hunger to allay,*
*Themselves destroying.*
*The elk, the hind and hart which, fleeing, bound*
*Far in the forest depths, and there are found;*
*And when at last they feel the fatal wound,*
*Die hard and crying.*
*Of* Birds, *there is a knavish robbing crew,*
*Which constantly the smaller tribes pursue;*
*The hawk and eagle sweep the azure blue,*
*With sharp eyes prying.*
*The chicken saker-hawk, with talons fell;*
*The sparrow-hawk; the vigilant castrel*
*Watching his enemy, till he may reel*
*And faint in flying.*
*The duck, the goose, the turkey, the proud swan,*
*The diver and the heron and the crane,*
*The snipe, the curlew, merlin and moorhen,*
*The foremost vieing;*
*The dove and pheasant, thievish blackbird, quail;*
*The widgeon, which an epicure may hail;*
*The teal and bob-o'-lincoln, all avail*
*For man's enjoyment.*
*But names are wanting wholly to explain*
*The numerous species of the feathered train;*
*And surely the recital were a vain*
*Misspent employment.*

*The hills and valleys, fields and forests wide,*
*As richly are, by nature's hand, supplied*
*With* Fruits. *Of which all will be satisfied*
*By this true story.*
*Acorns there are, the bitter and the sweet;*
*And nuts of various kinds, all choice to eat;*
*Of these the chestnuts, with the rest, compete*
*And win the glory.*
*And strawberries, which in proud scarlet shine;*
*The plum, the cherry, and grape clustering vine;*
*The ground-nut and the ground-bean, both, we find;*
*The artichoke, too.*
*The gooseberry, both sorts of mulberries;*
*The garlick, leek and field-salad and cives;*
*And hops and mints, with sweetest flatteries,*
*The eyes provoke do.*
*Within your woods, for house and ship, is found*
*Good building timber; in your untilled ground,*
*Do reeds and rushes and wild grass abound;*
*Upon your border*
*Lie stone for every use; some suitable*
*For polishing and grinding; some as well*
*For masonry and streets. 'Tis hard to tell*
*Them all in order.*
*Blacklead and chrystal, quicksilver and gold;*
*And clay to full or bake; your hills unfold*
*Whatever art and science seek to mould,*

*Or can discover.*
*You've* herbs, *both wholesome and medicinal,*
*Possessed of virtues wondrous powerful*
*The failing strength to raise, and wounds to heal,*
*And curing fever.*
*Sweet marjoram; and sassafras, whose root,*
*Like cassia, does the fainting soul recruit,*
*And o'er the fields its fragrant suckers shoot,*
*Like weeds, to harrow.*
*So grow the plants by thousands o'er the land,*
*Along the mountain top and water strand,*
*It is too strange for us to understand,*
*And to our sorrow.*
*For bee and wasp, sweet-smelling flowers bloom,*
*O'er all; renowned for colors and perfume;*
*More, than my Heroine can yet assume*
*To name, occurring.*
*Wherever men a helping hand accord*
*To nature, there behold! the fields reward*
*Them, without any care; no fears unt'ward*
*Of loss them worry'ng.*
*Whatever skilful science more may know,*
*And in your lap, from other countries, throw*
*For culture: these, fresh strength on you bestow,*
*Without consuming.*
*You've most delicious hand and kitchen fruits,*
*Greens, salads, radishes and savory shoots,*

*And turnips; and the cabbage you produce,*
*In large heads poming.*
*The biting herb — the strong tobacco plant;*
*The carrot and the Maltese parsnip; and*
*The melon, pumpkin, Spanish comfrey, grant*
*The sweetest pleasure.*
*Exotics which, from foreign climes they bear*
*Unto your bosom, need no special care;*
*But reach, untended, in your genial air,*
*Their proper measure.*
*There's wheat and rye; and barley, pea and bean;*
*Spelt, maize and buckwheat; all these kinds of grain*
*Do nobly grow: for horses to sustain,*
*Oats are awarded.*
*You've horses, cows, and wallowing swine and sheep;*
*Geese, ducks and hens; and rabbits (tame to keep)*
*Which will be all, both fat and choice to eat,*
*And thrive unguarded.*
*Air, water, soil, of greatest purity;*
*And all, combined in sweetest harmony,*
*Unite, the ploughed up land to fructify,*
*With strength unerring.*
*You seem the masterpiece of nature's hand;*
*Whatever does with breath of life expand,*

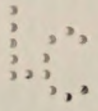
*Or comes from out the sea, or thrives on land,*
*On you conferring.*
*And, in a country, fitted happily,*
*With creek and channel, river, brook and sea,*
*For every use of man. I make the plea,*
*Who can deny it?*
*A land for trade and navigation sought;*
*With harbors which the earth herself has wrought*
*For aid to those who are in danger brought*
*And seek to fly it.*
*It is the land where milk and honey flow;*
*Where plants distilling perfume grow;*
*Where Aaron's rod with budding blossoms blow;*
*A very Eden.*
*Oh happy land! while envy you invite,*
*You soar far over all you thus excite;*
*And conquer whom by chance you meet in fight;*
*May God protect and*
*Defend and save you; peace and comfort give;*
*All strife and discord from your borders drive;*
*So Netherland your happiness perceive*
*With joy and pleasure.*
*So labor may in peace its fruits consume;*
*And Christ's true Church fresh as the lily bloom,*
*Its mark in you irrevocably hewn,*
*Henceforth forever.*
*Rule, doctrine, covenants, all in accord*

*With HIS pure word who is, of Lords, the Lord;*
*Where righteousness and truth may rest like broad*
*And solid pillars.*
*So may a city, house, or kingdom stand,*
*Which else have laid foundations in the sand,*
*And envy, pride, hate, lust, and violent hand,*
*Lurk in their cellars.*
*But you accept, O noblest land of all!*
*With thankfulness, HIS bounties liberal,*
*WHO has a pleasure garden made your soil,*
*That you might render*
*Your children an inheritance fore'er,*
*Until the Seed of Woman reappear,*
*For our redemption. Welcome hour! Who'll dare*
*HIS coming t'hinder?*

*Noch vaster.*

# SPURRING-VERSES

TO THE LOVERS OF THE COLONY AND BROTHERSHIP, TO BE ESTABLISHED ON THE SOUTH RIVER OF NEW NETHERLAND, BY PETER CORNELISON PLOCKHOY OF ZIERIKZEE, WITH HIS ASSOCIATES; AND THE FAVORABLE PRIVILEGES, FOR THAT PURPOSE, GRANTED BY THE NOBLE LORDS BURGOMASTERS OF THE CITY OF AMSTERDAM, THE 9TH OF JUNE 1662



## SPURRING-VERSES

YOU *poor, who know not how your living to obtain;*
*You affluent, who seek in mind to be content;*
*Choose you New Netherland, which no one shall disdain;*
*Before your time and strength here fruitlessly are spent.*
*There have you other ends, your labor to incite;*
*Your work, will generous soils, with usury, requite.*

*New Netherland's the flow'r, the noblest of all lands;*
*With richest blessings crowned, where milk and honey flow;*
*By the most High of All, with doubly lib'ral hands*
*Endowed; yea, filled up full, with what may thrive and grow.*

*The air, the earth, the sea, each pregnant with its gift,*
*The needy, without trouble, from distress to lift.*

*The birds obscure the sky, so numerous in their flight;*
*The animals roam wild, and flatten down the ground;*
*The fish swarm in the waters, and exclude the light;*
*The oysters there, than which none better can be found,*
*Are piled up, heap on heap, till islands they attain;*
*And vegetation clothes the forest, mead and plain.*

*You have a portion there which costs not pains or gold:*
*But if you labor give, then shall you also share*
*(With trust in Him who you from want does there uphold)*
*A rich reward, in time, for all your toil and care.*
*In cattle, grain and fruit, and every other thing;*
*Whereby you always have great cause His praise to sing.*

*What see you in your houses, towns and Fatherland?*
*Is God not over all? the heavens ever wide?*
*His blessings deck the earth, — like bursting veins expand*
*In floods of treasures o'er, wherever you abide;*
*Which neither are to monarchies nor duke-doms bound,*
*They are as well in one, as other country found.*

*But there, a living view does always meet your eye,*
*Of Eden, and the promised land of Jacob's seed;*
*Who would not, then, in such a formed com-munity,*
*Desire to be a freeman; and the rights decreed,*
*To each and every one, by Amstel's burgher Lords,*
*T'enjoy? and treat with honor what their rule awards?*

*Communities the groundwork are of every state;*
*They first the hamlet, village and the city make;*
*From whence proceeds the commonwealth, whose members, great*
*Become, an interest in the common welfare take.*

*'T is no Utopia; it rests on principles,*
*Which, for true liberty, prescribes you settled rules.*

*You will not aliens, in those far lands appear;*
*As formerly, in Egypt, e'en was Israel.*
*Nor have you slavery nor tyranny to fear,*
*Since Joseph's eyes do see, and on the compass fall.*
*The civic Fathers who on th' Y, perform their labors,*
*Are your protectors; and your countrymen are neighbors.*

*New Netherland's South River, — second Amazon,*
*For you a pleasure garden on its banks concedes.*
*Choose you the Swanendael, where Osset [1] had his throne,*

[1] Gilles Osset or Hosset was the commander of the colony which was sent out in 1630–1 to the Hoerekil or Swanendael, on the Delaware, by Godyn, Van Rensselaer, Bloemart, De Laet and David Pietersz de Vries, patroons under the West India Company. When de Vries went out, the next year, he found the colony destroyed; Osset and the rest of the colonists, thirty-three in number, having been barbarously murdered by the Indians, and their bodies left to rot in

*Or any other spot your avocation needs.*
*You have the choice of all; and you're left free*
*to choose;*
*Keep the conditions well, and you have naught*
*to lose.*

*Discard the base report, unworthy of your*
*ear;*
*'Tis forged by ignorance and hate and jealous*
*spite,*
*By those who are its authors, to bedim this*
*fair*
*Bright morning sun before the laughing noon-*
*day light.*
*An accident may hinder, but not change the*
*plan,*
*Whose gloss, take that away, you then may*
*fairly scan.*

the fields, where they were slain, around their half burnt fort. It is this *accident*, as he calls it, the poet deprecates, in the two following stanzas, from being urged to retard the proposed attempt to re-establish a colony in the same region. The city of Amsterdam had several years before sent out other colonists to the South River, who, with some previously settled there under the auspices of the West India Company, were their countrymen, whom the new colonists were to find as neighbors.

*'T was but an accident, which gives them stuff*
*to slight*
*That land, which,* as I know, *no proper rival*
*has;*
*In order from your purpose they may you*
*affright,*
*Who there desire to live, before you thither pass.*
*'T is groundless, ev'ry one may easily perceive.*
*Who now neglects the chance, great treasures*
*does he leave.*

JACOB STEENDAM,
*Noch vaster.*


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